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**Introduced by Senator Fuller**

February 26, 2014

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 91—Relative to Valley Fever Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 91, as introduced, Fuller. Valley Fever Awareness Month.

This measure would declare August 2014 as Valley Fever Awareness Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Valley Fever (coccidioidomycosis), a progressive,  
2 multisymptom, respiratory disorder, is a debilitating disease; and  
3 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is caused by the inhalation of tiny  
4 airborne fungi that live in the soil but are released into the air by  
5 soil disturbance or wind; and  
6 WHEREAS, Valley Fever attacks the respiratory system, causing  
7 infections that can lead to symptoms that resemble a cold,  
8 influenza, or pneumonia; and  
9 WHEREAS, If left untreated or mistreated, infection can spread  
10 from the lungs into the bloodstream, causing inflammation to the  
11 skin, permanent damage to lung and bone tissue, and swelling of  
12 the membrane surrounding the brain, leading to meningitis, which  
13 can be devastating and even fatal; and  
14 WHEREAS, Once serious symptoms of Valley Fever appear,  
15 including pneumonia and labored breathing, prompt treatment with  
16 often toxic antifungal drugs must be given, which is especially  
17 disagreeable for patients who require the drugs to be injected

1 beneath the base of their skulls for meningitis and which can cause  
2 side effects such as nausea, fever, and kidney damage; and

3 WHEREAS, Within California alone, Valley Fever is found in  
4 portions of the Sacramento Valley, all of the San Joaquin Valley,  
5 desert regions, and portions of southern California; and

6 WHEREAS, California does not have an official statewide  
7 method of tracking the rate of Valley Fever infections; and

8 WHEREAS, In the last 10 years, infection rates in California  
9 and Arizona have risen 400 percent, from an estimated 31 cases  
10 for every 100,000 people in 1999 to 157 cases for every 100,000  
11 people in 2011; and

12 WHEREAS, In Kern County, the rate of infection of Valley  
13 Fever more than tripled from 2009, for a total of 2,051 cases in  
14 2010 and 2,734 cases in 2011; and

15 WHEREAS, San Joaquin County Public Health Services  
16 recorded 27 cases of Valley Fever in 2009, 46 cases in 2010, and  
17 123 cases in 2011; and

18 WHEREAS, Valley Fever infection rates rose twelvefold  
19 nationwide from 1995 to 2009, according to the federal Centers  
20 for Disease Control and Prevention, and researchers estimate that  
21 the fungus infects more than 150,000 people each year who either  
22 suffer serious ailments without knowing the cause of their illness  
23 or escape detection of the disease; and

24 WHEREAS, Misdiagnosis of Valley Fever is so pervasive that  
25 experts say that some people suffer and even die from Valley Fever  
26 without knowing they ever had the disease; and

27 WHEREAS, The Governor declared a Drought State of  
28 Emergency on January 17, 2014, and California is experiencing  
29 record dry conditions, with 2014 projected to become the driest  
30 year on record; and

31 WHEREAS, Dry conditions and lack of precipitation present  
32 urgent problems regarding Valley Fever; and

33 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is usually found in soil two to eight  
34 inches from the surface and the extreme dry conditions caused by  
35 drought increase the chances of coccidioidomycosis airborne fungi  
36 exposure; and

37 WHEREAS, Central Valley prison inmates are being infected  
38 by Valley Fever at epidemic rates, contributing significantly to the  
39 state's prison health care costs; and

1 WHEREAS, The rapid spread of Valley Fever at state prisons  
2 in the Central Valley has resulted in multiple prison inmate deaths  
3 and prompted calls to close certain affected prisons, further  
4 exacerbating efforts to comply with federal orders to reduce prison  
5 overcrowding; and

6 WHEREAS, Valley Fever kills between 100 to 200 more  
7 Americans every year than tuberculosis; and

8 WHEREAS, Valley Fever most seriously affects the young, the  
9 elderly, those with lowered immune systems, and those of African  
10 American and Filipino descent; and

11 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is a disease that has been studied for  
12 the past 100 years but still remains impossible to control and  
13 difficult to treat; and

14 WHEREAS, There is no known cure for Valley Fever, but  
15 researchers are closer than ever to finding a much-needed vaccine  
16 against this devastating disease; and

17 WHEREAS, The research effort to find a vaccine for Valley  
18 Fever and a funding partnership including the State of California  
19 were approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Wilson  
20 in 1997; now, therefore, be it

21 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
22 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature does hereby proclaim  
23 August 2014 as Valley Fever Awareness Month; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
25 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.